

Message Text

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70/20

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 SCS-01 AID-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-01 INR-11

NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01 USIA-12 SWF-02

PM-03 H-01 L-03 NSC-04 SP-03 SS-20 DRC-01 OMB-01

IO-03 ISO-00 (ISO) W

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R 271835Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6496

INFO USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 3870

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- EO 11652: GDS VICE EO 11652: N/A

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PFOR, PBOP, ELTN, ES HO, GT

SUBJ: HONDURAN-SALVADORAN FRONTIER ACCESS IN WAKE OF "FIFI"

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

1. ONE RESULT OF LAST WEEK'S DEVASTATING PASSAGE OF HURRICANE FIFI THROUGH REGION HAS BEEN THE TEMPORARY AND LIMITED SUSPENSION BY GOES OF ITS RETALIATORY PROHIBITION ON TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS DESTINED FOR HONDURAS ACROSS HONDURAN-SALVADORAN FRONTIER (AS DISTINCT FROM PRODUCTS BEING SHIPPED THROUGH SALVADORAN TO THIRD COUNTRY, WHICH HAS BEEN PERMITTED IN PAST).

2. IN VIEW OF OBVIOUS CRITICAL NEED FOR RELIEF MATERIALS TO REACH HONDURAS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, GOES ANNOUNCED IT WOULD PERMIT EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN RELIEF SUPPLIES DESTINED OR HONDURAS TO CROSS THE BORDER (IT UNCLEAR WHETHER THIS RELAXATION
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APPLIES TO ALL VEHICLES OR ONLY TO THIRD COUNTRY VEHICLES).

EMBASSY AWARE OF AT LEAST ONE SHIPMENT OF PROPANE GAS FROMT GUATEMALA WHICH HAS CROSSED FRONTIER UNDER THEIS CATEGORY.

3. LOCAL PAPERS ON SEPTEMBER 24 CARRIED APPEAL TO GOES FORM HONDURAN TRUCKERS' SPOKESMEN WHO ASKED THAT HONDURAN TRUCKS BE ALLOWED PERMANENT ACCESS TO SALVADORAN ROAD SYSTEM SINCE THEY CLAIM THAT THEIR NORMAL ROUTES TO GUATEMALA WERE MADE IMPASSIBLE BY STORM DAMAGE. PRESIDENT MOLINA RESPONDED ON SEPTMEBER 25 BY STATING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT PASSAGE OF HONDURAN VEHICLES CARRYING RELIEF OR EMERGENCY SUPPLIES AND WOULD "CONSIDER THE POSSIBLIITY" OF RESPONDING FAVORABLY TO ANY REQUEST FRO PERMANENT FREE PASSAGE CF FORMALLY PRESENTED, BUT HE WANTED IT UNDERSTOOD THAT THE LATTER ACTION BY GOES COULD ONLY BE TAKEN ON BASIS OF "STRICT RECIPROCITY", I.E.N THAT GOH PERMIT SALVADORAN VEHICLES FREE ACCESS TO ITS ROADS. MOLINA EXPLAINED THAT "AT THIS MOMENT OUR SENTIMENTS FLOW WITH GREAT STRENGTH TOWARD HONDURAS WHICH WAS MOST AFFLICTED BY THE UNCONTROLLABLE FORCES OF NATURE." MOLINA STATEMENT EFFECTIVELY ENDED SPECULATION THAT TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF RESTRICTIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS MIGHT LEAD TO UNILATERAL GENERAL BROADER RELAXATIONS.

4. IN RELATED MATTER, ACTING FON MIN CASTANEDA IN-FORMED EMCHDDFH

OF PROBLEM HIS MINISTRY NOW WRESTLING WITH. ACCORDING TO CASTANEDA, GOES HAS RECEIVED SOME ONE THOUSAND REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM SALVADORAN CITIZENS WHO ASSISTING HONDURAS

TO LOOK FOR MISSING RELATIVES. CASTANEDA SAID THAT, WHILE GOES OBVIOUSLY SYMPATHETIC TO SUCH REQUESTS, IT ALSO AWARE OF BURDEN SUCH AN INFLUX WOULD CREATE FOR HONDURAS DURING EMERGENCY. ALSO ROOM FOR MISINTERPRETATION BY GOH OF MOTIVES BEHIND ANY SUCH QUERY OBVIOUSLY GREAT. GOES FINDS ITSELF IN QUANDARY SINCE IT KNOWS THAT THERE ARE VALID REASONS WHY GOH IS LIKELY TO REFUSE SUCH REQUEST, BUT SUCH REFUSAL WOULD BE SUBJECT TO SALVADORAN MISINTERPRETATION THAT IT WASDONE CAPRICIOUSLY AND OUT OF SPITE AND CREATE IMPRESSION THAT GOES HAS GIVEN SOMETHING IN EXCHANGE FOR NOTHING, I.E., THE GOES IS LETTING RELIEF SUPPLIES REACH HONDURAS, WHILE AT SAME CONFIDENTIAL

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TIME AND UNDER SAME CONDITIONS OF HUMANITARIAN NEEDS HONDURAS WOULD NOT LET SALVADORANS IN ON PERSONAL MISSIONS OF MERCY. GOES FEARS SUCH A DISTORTED INTERPRETATION, PARTICULARLY IF PICKED-UP BY PRESS, WOULD BE MOST UNDESIRABLE. IT WILL ENDEAVOR TO SEEK SOME KIND OF SOLUTION THROUGH THE RED CROSS OF BOTH COUNTRIES. CAMPBELL

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Message Attributes

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